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COMIC SHOP NEWS™

Sparta USA

GRANT MORRISON

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BEGINNING WITH #10 **MARCH 2010**

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David Lapham's Spartan Approach

David Lapham is well known for his realistic, gritty tales of the dark side of human nature and evil as seen in such works as ***Stray Bullets*** and ***Young Liars***. He's abandoning the realistic for the fantastic in his new limited series, ***Sparta USA***—but he's not abandoning his dark view of human nature.

Don't confuse ***Sparta USA*** with Sparta, Illinois, the town famous in through the 1980s as the place where most American comics were printed; this is a very different place indeed. "Sparta is an All-American town, where mom, apple pie, and football are religion," Lapham explained. "Where the schools teach American values as math, history, subterfuge, sabotage, and seduction. Where the pursuit of happiness means over the other guy's dead body... *if* you can get away with it without upsetting the All-American veneer.

"These are the ways the Maestro has taught the residents of Sparta, handed down from George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. In Sparta, football is king and the greatest football player of all time was Godfrey McLaine. Godfrey disappeared three years ago into the Yeti-infested mountains that isolate Sparta from the rest of the country.

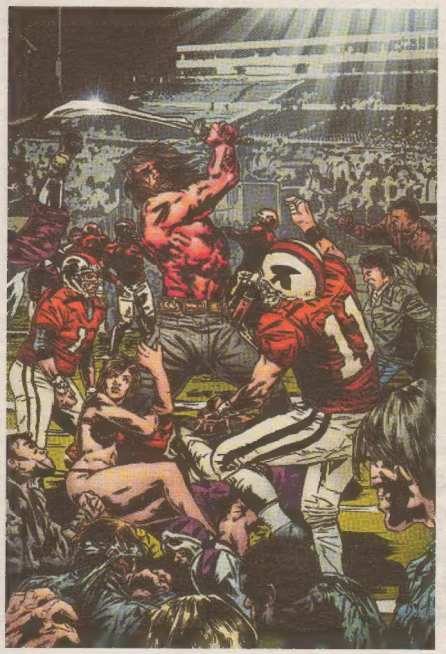
"Now Godfrey has returned. Bigger, taller, and redder than when he left. He's sporting a magical sword, among other powerful artifacts, and he's got a big wake-up call for the residents of Sparta about where they really are and who the Maestro is."

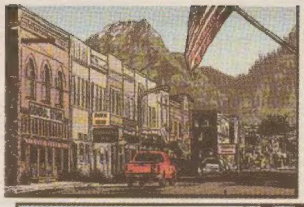
If Godfrey's sword seems like an epic fantasy element—well, that's the point! "Of course, a proper hero *has* to have a sword, right? But Godfrey has a whole bunch of tricks in his magic sack which speak to the things he found on the other side," Lapham said. "Many play a role here and some hint at what will hopefully just be the first of many stories."

What is Godfrey's epic quest? "Godfrey wants to save Sparta and stop the Maestro," Lapham said. "Whether he's successful or not you'll have to wait and see—but he has come back to be the classic noble hero... He's returning to a lot of left-behind baggage, though."

Is Sparta a microcosm of the modern United States? "It could be read that way, sure. But It's not intended specifically like that—it's more an extension of my dark soul," Lapham said with a laugh. "Most of my work is an extension of individuals and how individuals treat each other. I don't view America as the evil empire. Does the country do a lot of messed-up stuff? Sure. Do I trust the government blindly? Nope. But I think *every* group is evil. Most all organizations, governments, charities, religions…basically any groups larger than three tend to go bad. But having said all that, ***Sparta*** is *not* a political statement about the current climate of our nation."

What inspired this grim view of small-town America? In some ways, it sounds like a very bleak counterpoint to more upbeat works like *Thornton Wilder's* ***Our Town***. "That's funny, because a good writer friend of mine used to describe ***Stray Bullets*** to people as '***Pulp Fiction*** meets ***Our Town***,'" Lapham said. "I'm always interested in people doing secret things—in the ways that we really hurt each other. Still, first and foremost ***Sparta*** is an adventure, a fantasy. These elements are used to create a very unique town, but it's primarily a big action story. Maybe ***Our Town*** meets ***Fables*** meets… ***Patton***."





The addition of anachronistic elements like the aforementioned magical sword certainly bring a fantastic element to a story that, on the surface, sounds more real-world. Are there other fantasy elements in ***Sparta USA***? "Yes. A lot of the early press concentrated on the football. Football is an extension of the extreme Americana, but this *is* a fantasy adventure. There is mystery to the whole of the thing, but by the end of issue #1 you'll have a sense of it."

What led Lapham to choose Sparta as the setting of his story? "It's a name that evokes instant imagery of warriors and also of mythology and fantasy. It's also a common name for a middle-America football team. The people of Sparta believe that they're unique and special. The best of the best. It also speaks to the massive amount of action and events that will occur."

Just who is Godfrey McLaine, why did he leave Sparta, and why has he returned? "Godfrey is the Johnny Unitas/Joe Montana/Peyton Manning of Sparta. And since Sparta is a small town, that basically means he *owns* it—at least he did before he left. Women wanted to sleep with him, men wanted to be him. Godfrey owns every passing record; he thwarted every attempt by his backups to have him assassinated. Godfrey was The Maestro's favorite son. But then he disappeared. No one ever leaves Sparta because of the Yeti that populate the mountains surrounding the town. Everyone assumed Godfrey was dead. Now he's returned because he's been out there in the big wide world beyond the Yeti, and he knows a thing or three about what's really going on in Sparta."

Assassinated? These people take their football seriously! "Not just football," Lapham said. "It's how you get ahead here. Assistant becomes boss by killing, disgracing, blackmailing, or otherwise getting rid of their superior. The American Dream. Why wait? We want the world and we want it *now*. Your boss is no fool. He's watching you, too—but basically, anything goes as long as it doesn't spill out into the public. That is the worst crime possible: to air your dirty laundry in public. There are no shootouts or gangs. That would be harshly punished by the Maestro. But if you can disgrace your rival like Mrs. Fleming taught you in 9th grade Seduction class, you're gold."

So Godfrey is the equivalent of a pro football star, not a high school star athlete. But doesn't that mean that Sparta would have some contact with the outside world, if only to have opponents to play against? "Yes. Godfrey's a pro, but that doesn't really matter. In some small towns, a high school star is bigger than a pro. In Sparta, football is the thing and Godfrey is as big as they come and plays on the highest stage Sparta offers—which to Spartans is everything.

"Sparta is a decent-sized town and nearly everyone plays," Lapham continued. "There are plenty of teams to play, and without revealing too much there's an element where the winner of the Sparta championship faces the National champs, which the Maestro brings in at the end of the season."

What makes Godfrey such a threat to Sparta's status quo? "He's got the Maestro's number. He knows what the color of the grass is on the other side. But as loved as he is, coming back to upset the status quo does not go over well with the masses. People love their movie stars in movies, love their sports players playing sports. People want their action filmmakers making action films. People aren't so keen on their stars changing roles."

Who is Johnny Franks, and why is he so important to all sides in this drama? "Johnny Franks is the man in the middle. He's the new football star—the one the Maestro has groomed to replace Godfrey. He's the new star of the people. Godfrey kind of needs him to win their hearts and minds. The Maestro needs him to lead the people toward *his* master plan, and there are a few others who need Johnny. The path to power exists through Johnny. Poor Johnny won't know what hit him!"

The Maestro seems less like a malevolent invidual and more like an archetypal figure of evil akin to *Stephen King's* Randall Flagg—a comparison that Lapham sees as valid. "The Maestro runs Sparta and maintains the rules as set out by the President. He treats the people of Sparta as his children. Everyone loves and fears him. The Maestro is very tall—taller than even the returned Godfrey. He's also white—as unnaturally white as Godfrey is red. The fact that the residents accept him as normal is the first clue that we're not in Kansas anymore."

Has anyone ever challenged the Maestro, his motives, and his methods before now? "No, no one has ever challenged him... until now," Lapham said. "He is in many ways a father figure. They *do* fear and respect him, but also honor and love him."

What's the significance of Godfrey's unnatural redness and the Maestro's unnatural whiteness? Do the colors have socio-political significance, since red is often used to represent a political viewpoint. "Ahh! Godfrey the Commie! Of course, red can also mean Republican, right? We can make these symbols into *anything* really," Lapham said. "The thought was a little more surface than, that I would say. First, to have those elements which tell you that you're *not* in the world of reality. And there is an element of the Maestro being cold, calm, and also good, while Godfrey is passionate, violent—a demon/troublemaker. Lastly, this is a comic and they create quite the visual, being big and colorful."

Sparta USA seems bigger in scope than Lapham's earlier works; it seems to function on a more allegorical level. What inspired this approach? "The idea led the approach," Lapham said. "It's more high drama, broad action than ***Stray Bullets***. The people are more archetypes, less grey—except when they're being deliberately grey. This is my 100-million dollar movie experience.

"I don't generally come up with what they call 'high concepts.' I'm a guy who makes a normal argument interesting. A man robs a liquor store —I can make a hell of a gut-wrenching robbery; I don't usually need the robbery to turn into an alien invasion.

"But ***Sparta*** just clicked. I started with a very 'me' concept, which was a town with a dark heart—but when I thought out why this town was and how it came to be, this whole fantastic world just fell into place in and I was really excited to run with it."

How long has ***Sparta USA*** been in the works? "I think we're going on two years from when I first sent a pitch over to *Ben Abernathy* at Wildstorm," Lapham said, "which seems crazy to me. But on something loke this, a creator owned six-issue series, Wildstorm likes to have the whole thing completed before launching—which I imagine is good to guarantee the fans it will all come out in a timely fashion. But damn if I'm not impatient to see this come out! It's different for me in

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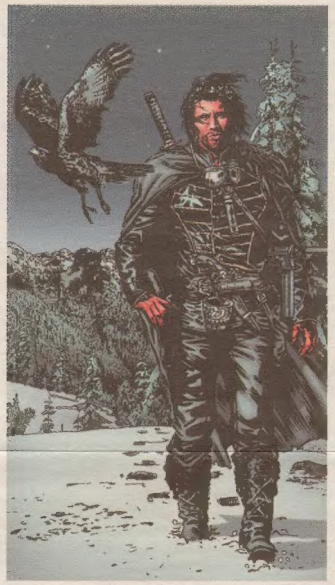
that it's a real action adventure story it's very straight up and I think people are going to love it."

Joining Lapham on ***Sparta USA*** is artist *Johnny Timmons*. Lapham explained how Timmons became a part of the ***Sparta*** team. "I worked with Johnny on a Wolverine short a few years ago and loved his style. We kept in touch and when this came up, I was excited to call him to partner with. He was the first guy that came to mind and he's been perfect. He's a young guy and I think readers will be astounded by his growth from issue one to issue six. He starts at a very high level and goes up from there. He was perfect for designing this very real world. It's so real you can live there. Then he can bring in these fantasy elements and they work seamlessly. I people buy this thing, so we can do more ***Sparta*** stories together because there's just, so much I'd love to make him draw."



Does that mean that, when this six-parter wraps up, there still might be more Spartan tales to be told somewhere down the line? "I sure hope so!" Lapham said. "It's a complete story, but there's a world created which I've deliberately designed hoping that readers will beg for more. Sort of like the first ***Star Wars*** is complete and could have been the only movie, but there are plenty of questions and whole universe to explore if you want it."

Sparta USA #1, a $2.99 comic from WildStorm, is slated for March 3rd release. (Readers who'd like more info direct from *David Lapham* will find him answering questions at **http://jasonaaron.org/index.php**)

by Cliff Biggers

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com*

Big Wheels Keep on Turnin'

Last year, the Dabel Brothers launched an auspicious adaptation of *Robert Jordan's* best-selling ***Wheel of Time*** saga—but the series came to a halt after only two issues, leaving fans eager for more.

This spring, Dynamite Publications—the company that took over all the Dabel Brothers' projects earlier this year—will relaunch ***Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time*** with a bargain-priced bumper edition before continuing the series with new material.

"Our plans for ***Wheel of Time*** are to continue where the Dabels left off, and adapt ***Eye of the World*** first," Dynamite publisher *Nick Barrucci* said. "Each series will consist of six issues, six series, for a total of thirty-six issues. Of course, we're partnering with Tor, the publisher of the *Robert Jordan* novels, on the graphic novels, and Tor will collect and release those on a regular basis as series are complete.

"***Wheel of Time*** is a grand story and a huge saga, and we will be doing the work justice. We have to balance making the work true to Mr. Jordan's epic, but at the same time deliver a tapestry that works for comics and isn't so long that people lose interest."

Rather than just reprinting the Dabels' #0 and #1, "what we're doing is reissuing them together in a 64-page comic that will sell for $3.99—the price of a single issue," Barrucci explained. "This will enable people who missed out the first time—or who don't remember those issues and don't want to dig through their collection to find the earlier editions—to get up to speed before we launch all-new material starting with ***Wheel of Time #2***. We're also trying to put some bonus material in here."

Does Dynamite's contract include the rights to the posthumous ***Wheel of Time*** novels written by *Brandon Sanderson* from Jordan outlines? "At this moment, no," Barrucci said. "Right now, we're just working on the novels that were written by Jordan—but at the same time, I rule out the possibility of moving forward with *Brandon Sanderson's* novels. Brandon is a wonderful writer in his own right, so it would be an honor to adapt his works into comics as well."

Rather than working with different creators on each six-issue arc, "we're working with *Chuck Dixon* and *Chase Connelly* on all thirty-six issues," Barrucci said. "They've both done a wonderful job to date, so there's no reason to change what's working. Chase is already working on the third issue already; we're far enough ahead that we should be able to keep the book on schedule."

Dixon describes ***Wheel of Time*** as "the ultimate battle between good and evil—but it's more than that, as Jordan imbued these stories with more layers and shading than that. Between the swordplay, sieges, and chases, you get a fully-realized world of characters you can invest yourself in. This is big, dense stuff with lots of twist and turns along the way, and a cast that are more relatable than many other works in this genre.

"I'm already working on the script for the fourth issue, and I'm anxious to get back to work after too long a hiatus," Dixon said.

Artist *Chase Conley* explained how he initially became involved. "I had in been friends with the Dabel Brothers prior to their acquiring the license for ***Wheel of Time,***" Conley said. "They eventually approached me with this great opportunity... Once Dynamite got involved, they felt confident in my work so they asked me to continue the job I was doing."

Conley came to ***Wheel of Time*** with little knowledge of Jordan's creation. "I had always known of the existence of the series, of course; I worked in a bookstore for two years and I sold an impressive number of Jordan books during my time there. I wasn't a diehard Jordan fan in the beginning, though I was a fantasy fan in general. It worked out better that way because as I began designing, I also began to learn more about this world and its characters. That kept me coming

SPIDER-MAN

BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER

AS SABRETOOTH STALKS THE BACK ALLEYS OF NEW YORK...
SOONER OR LATER I'LL PICK UP THE WALL-CRAWLER'S TRAIL, AND THEN--
THAT SHADOW OVERHEAD! IT MUST BE HIM!
NO! IT'S ANOTHER BLASTED SUPERHERO! THE ONE CALLED DAREDEVIL!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 2-18
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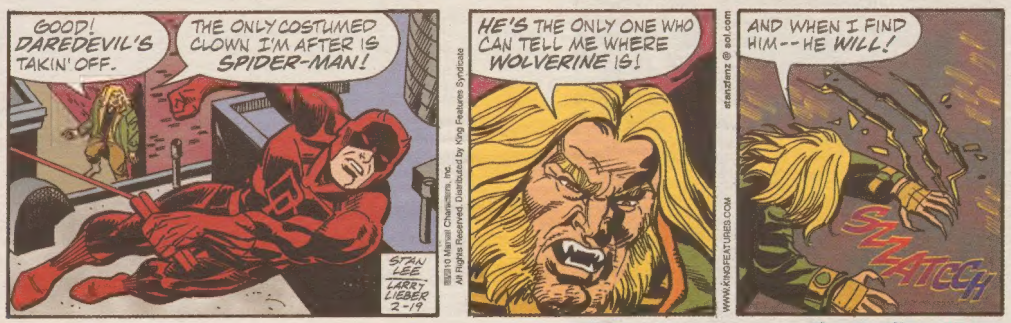
GOOD! DAREDEVIL'S TAKIN' OFF.
THE ONLY COSTUMED CLOWN I'M AFTER IS SPIDER-MAN!
HE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN TELL ME WHERE WOLVERINE IS!
AND WHEN I FIND HIM--HE WILL!
SLATECH
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 2-19
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back to the original material with a fresh eye."

Is it challenging to adapt a work of this scope? "The *size* of this story is the challenge," Conley said. "Jordan fleshed out so many different elements of this world that you really have to pay attention when designing and do the necessary research. That same challenge is what makes it fun, though."

Robert Jordan's Wheel of Time #1 is slated for April release.

T'Nod Ssim Ti!

Long relegated to supporting character roles, the enchanting Zatanna is about to graduate to star status!

Last year, DC announced plans for an ongoing Zatanna series. This spring, at long last, they deliver on that promise with the debut of ***Zatanna*** by *Paul Dini & Stephane Roux*.

Over at the DCU Blog The Source, Dini talked about the popular heroine and his plans for her series. "Outside of her star turn in ***Seven Soldiers of Victory***, her ongoing supporting role in ***JLA***, and guest appearances elsewhere, Zatanna doesn't come with a lot of backstory. That's both a blessing and a challenge for me as a writer. I don't have to adhere to seventy years of continuity, but that doesn't give me a lot of history to draw from, either.

"That said, I've been having a lot of fun populating her world with new characters, friends and allies as well as an entirely new mystical rogues gallery. I'm out to create some really unique and creepy villains, ones that aggressively prey on humankind the way gangsters in a crime book would victimize innocent people. As Zatanna herself says in the first issue, there's little in the way of human punishment that can be enforced on evil mystics. There are few laws they are compelled to obey, no jails to hold them, and no way ordinary people can defend themselves from their attacks. Zatanna has taken it upon herself to operate as both peacekeeper and avenger between those two worlds.

"Though a lot about Zatanna's world is new, it is still firmly rooted in the DC Universe. She's still a JLA member, and that will play into her stories now and then. Also, I plan to explore her somewhat dicey relationship with her younger cousin, Zachary Zatara. I saw a good chance to inject some family discord there, so when I was developing the book, I ran some ideas by *Geoff Johns*. He created Zach, so I wanted to get his okay before I shook things up. Luckily Geoff was cool with what I wanted to do, so readers can expect to see Zach becoming a permanent part of Zee's world."

Artist *Stephane Roux* added a few words about the new series. "I'm a fan of the character *and* a longer-time fan of the writer. Paul's delivering very exciting scripts, pushing the character in directions that make it so much fun for me to draw. I'm dealing with various dimensions, literally. You'll be scared, you'll be excited, you'll enjoy the fights she's going through. And because it's Paul, because it's Zatanna, I simply can't afford to deliver average art. Not to mention *Karl Story's* helping me make art look great. Hope the effort shows; hope you like it."

Zatanna #1 is slated for May release.

The Son Also Rises

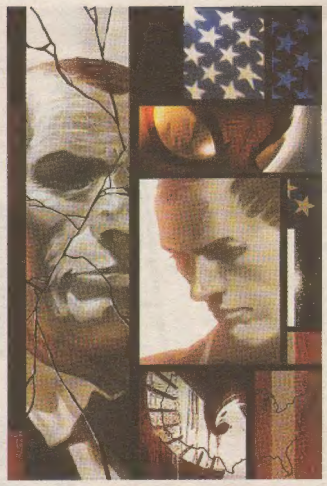
Thought that Harry Osborn had given up the armored identity created for him by his father in the "American Son" storyline? Think again! Osborn is back in action, post-***Siege***, in ***Amazing Spider-Man Presents American Son***, a four-issue miniseries written by *Brian Reed*, and illustrated by *Philip Brionnes*.

"American Son focuses on where Harry Osborn is now in his life," Reed told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Vaneta Rogers*. "He's in kind of a bad place after the events of 'American Son' in ***Amazing Spider-Man***. He's got no money left. He's popping pills. He's sharing an apartment. And things just go from bad to worse after ***Siege***.

"What's resulted is he's the focus of the attention of the press. Everything that happens with Norman Osborn at the end of ***Siege*** means every reporter on planet Earth wants Harry's comment on it. So he's being hounded night and day...

"In the middle of all this, he's got an FBI agent who shows up at the Coffee Bean and says, 'I know what you're doing.' And Harry says, 'What do you mean? What do you know I'm doing?' And the agent says, 'I know you stole the American Son armor out of Norman's lab.'

"That's what begins our story. The American Son armor has been stolen and it's being used. Harry's denying it like crazy, but we're seeing all kinds of signs that Harry might be moonlighting as a superhero. And it could be him. But even if it's not him, *someone* is in the American Son armor, and we don't know whether or not it's Harry Osborn."



How does Spider-Man become involved in all this? "When Harry is wearing this armor and trying to do the superhero thing—or at least everybody thinks he is—Peter, being a friend, puts on the Spider-Man suit and goes to Harry to say, 'Look, you need to knock this off,'" Reed explained

Reed is quite happy to be writing Spidey projects like this and the recent ***Jackpot*** series. "Spider-Man was what I spent all my allowance on as a kid. It's why I wanted to write comics, was to write Spider-Man. I got into writing Spider-Man when I was co-writing the ***Ultimate Spider-Man*** videogame, and that was my doorway into Marvel. I love writing this character. My favorite part of writing Spider-Man is when I get emails from readers saying, 'Why aren't you writing Spider-Man full time?' And I think, 'Yay! I did my job right!'"

Let's keep our fingers crossed that this project paves the way for Reed's promotion to the ***Amazing Spider-Man*** writing team in the near future—but until that happens, we can all enjoy his take on Spidey in this May-premiering miniseries.

CSNsider

•***The Shield*** star *Michael Chiklis* is working with co-creator *Anny Simon Beck* and comics writer *Marc Andreyko* to launch a new series, ***Pantheon***, which is described by IDW Publishing as "a dark and stylized story of ancient Greek gods returning to a ravaged, chaotic near-future Earth, where they battle for the fate of mankind."

"As a kid, Greek Gods were very real to me, so the chance to bring my childhood heroes and villains to life in the modern world is irresistible," said Chiklis, a third generation Greek-American. "Besides, I couldn't say no to Zeus. . . no one in the family would ever talk to me again." The five-parter pits Zeus's fellow gods against the Titans in an epic battle of good versus evil and father versus son. The April-premiering series will feature art by *Stephen Molnar*.

Chiklis is also cast in a pilot, ***No Ordinary Family***, in which he plays the father of a family that has superpowers; the pilot is the work of co-creators *Jon Feldman* and *Greg Berlanti*, one of the screenwriters of the upcoming ***Green Lantern*** film and creator/co-writer of the acclaimed but underrated ***Eli Stone*** (which really deserves to continue as a comic book series of its own).

•The School Gyrls (a 21st Century Monkees-esque teen girl pop trio featuring *Mandy Rain, Monica Anne Parales, & Jacque Pyles*, created by rapper *Nick Cannon*) have an album coming out in late March and a feature film later this spring—but before the album and the film are released, they'll be making their comic book debut in ***Archie #607***. Look for it in mid-March.

•Fantagraphics has landed the rights to collect *Roy Crane's* acclaimed comic strip ***Buz Sawyer***. The strip focused on a Navy pilot who fought in the Pacific during WWII; the 336-page ***Buz Sawyer Volume One: The War in the Pacific*** will collect all the daily strips published during WWII plus a selection of the best of the Sunday strips featuring Buz's pal and comrade-in-arms

Continued on page 6

MJ HAS A SPECIAL REHEARSAL TODAY.
THAT MEANS I'M ON MY OWN.
I CAN DO ANYTHING I WANT.
THE ONLY DRAWBACK IS--
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 2-20
ALL I WANT IS TO BE WITH HER!
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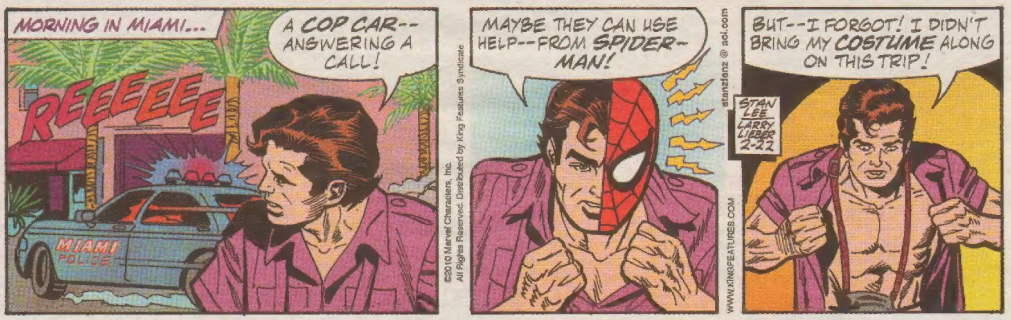
MORNING IN MIAMI...
A COP CAR-- ANSWERING A CALL!
REEEEEE
MIAMI POLICE
MAYBE THEY CAN USE HELP--FROM SPIDER-MAN!
BUT--I FORGOT! I DIDN'T BRING MY COSTUME ALONG ON THIS TRIP!
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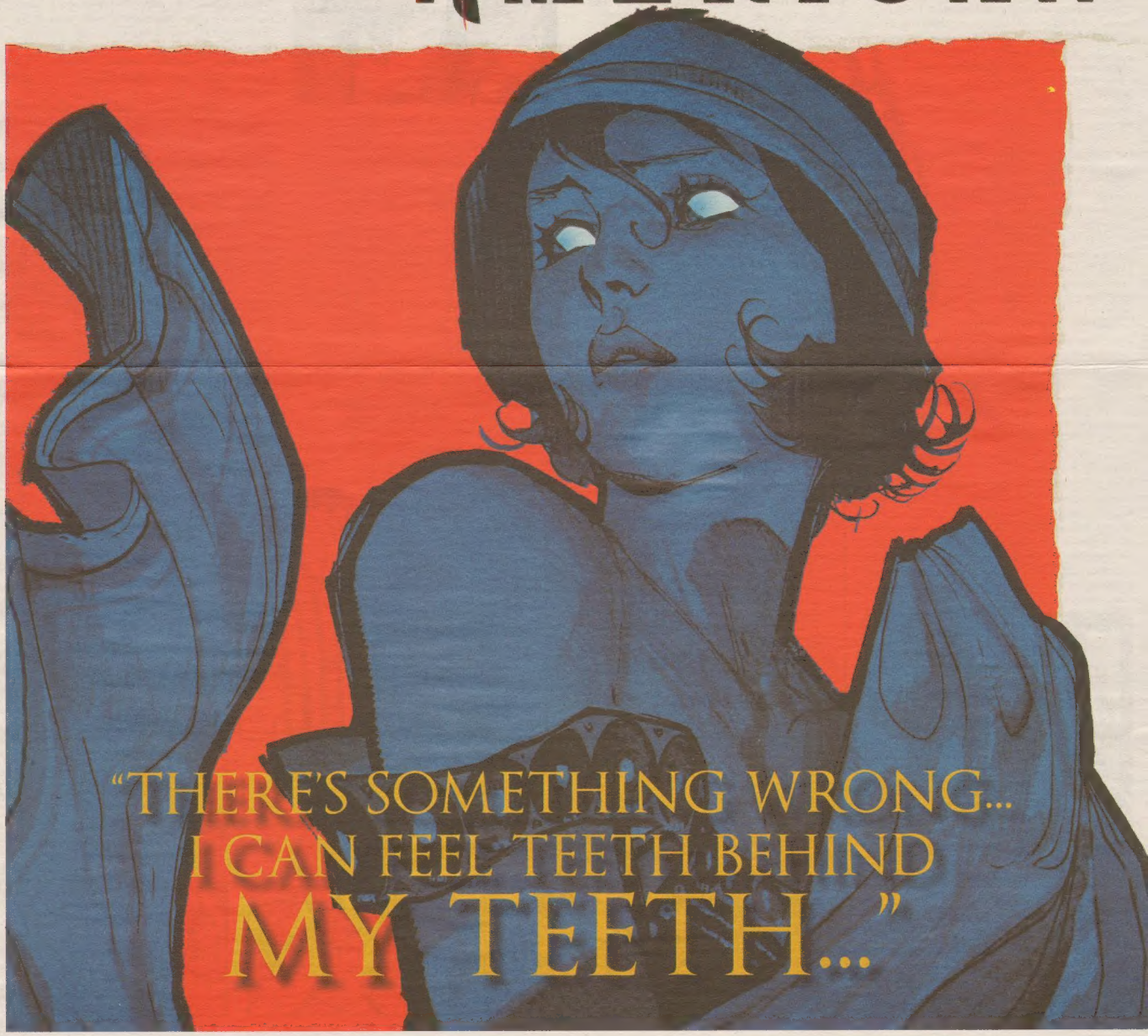
SCOTT SNYDER + RAFAEL AL

AMERICAN



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VAMPIRE

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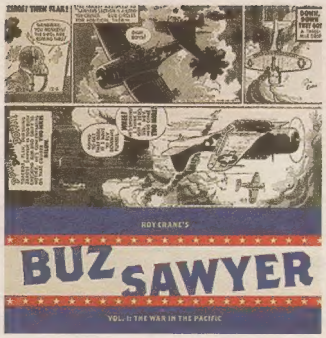


Roscoe Sweeney. Look for the first volume later this summer.

•Marvel has announced a second book in the revamped Avengers franchise: ***Secret Avengers,*** an ongoing series by *Ed Brubaker & Mike Deodato* that launches in May. What Marvel *isn't* revealing, though, is the team's lineup; rather than spotlighting a new member every day, they're offering a shadowed silhouette along with a slogan, leaving it to readers to speculate who'll be a part of the team and who won't.

"It's the culmination of all my favorite things about Marvel comics," Brubaker told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Vaneta Rogers*. "It's an Avengers book, but I think some members of the cast will be surprising to people. But it's definitely going to have a bit of an espionage tinge to it. It's going to be a crazy book. I think it will be a lot different than people expect it to be, though."

•*Christopher Nolan,* the man responsible for those remarkable ***Batman*** films of the past few years, is taking charge of the ***Superman*** film franchise for Warner Bros, according to **deadline.com**. While it's unlikely that Nola will direct both the ***Superman*** reboot and the next ***Batman*** film, speculation has him acting in a supervisory role to "ensure The Man Of Steel gets off the ground." And that *has* to be good news to anyone who remembers ***Superman Returns...***

Avengers Re-Assemble

Marvel continues to reveal details of the post-***Siege*** Avengers lineup, and now we know that two of the team's founding members are on board when the series relaunches in May.

Thor (whose "home town" of Asgard was at the center of the ***Siege*** conflict) will rejoin the team. Thor was a part of the team back in its 1963 debut, and has been a member of the Avengers off and on since then.

Tony Stark, aka Iron Man, is also a core member of the new Avengers team. Like Thor, Iron was a part of Lee & Kirby's Avengers lineup way back there in ***Iron Man #1,*** and he will play a pivotal role in the new team, wearing armor redesigned by ***Avengers*** artist *John Romita Jr.*

Also joining the team is a former villain turned hero who joined the Avengers lineup beginning with ***Avengers #16,*** and has led both the Avengers as well as an underground Avengers squad. In addition to his role as Hawkeye, Clint Barton has played the hero as Ronin.

As *CSN* told you last week, Captain America will be a part of the lineup... but this isn't the same Captain America who joined the team way back in ***Avengers #4.*** Instead, it's the Bucky Barnes Captain America who'll be a part of the team when the series relaunches.

Jessica Drew, better known as Spider-Woman, is the fifth member of the team; she's been a regular part of *Brian Bendis'* Avengers cast, and has been a member of the team off and on for many years

Avengers fans should also note that series artist *John Romita Jr.* will also supply the visuals for Marvel's Free Comic Book Day 2010 book featuring Iron Man and Thor.

•Title change for ***Iron Man 1.5,*** the series that fills in the gap between the first and second ***Iron Man*** films. The three-part series will now carry the title of ***Iron Man 2: Public Identity,*** and will be written by *Joe Casey & Justin Theroux.*

•IDW continues their comprehensive reprinting of *Berkeley Breathed's* ***Bloom County*** in April with the release of ***Bloom County: The Complete Library Volume Two.*** Not only does the book include almost 21 months of daily and Sunday strips, most shot from Breathed's personal archives of original art, but it also includes supplemental commentary by Breathed. "In the spirit of humiliating self-disclosure that has become so trendy of late, I stuffed this volume with more embarrassing background stories behind the cartoons. Drugs, sex and gunplay, it's all there," Breathed said.

"Berkeley just turned in his margin comments for ***Volume Two,***" editor *Scott Dunbier* added, "and they are *hysterically* funny. One of the many things I love about my job is that I get to read things like this—before any of you—and I get *paid* to do it!"

At the same time the second volume is released, IDW will also offer a ***Bloom County: The Complete Library Volume One Limited Signed Edition,*** featuring a tipped-in bookplate signed by Breathed.

"I defend those that cannot defend themselves."
"I do not dream about the future, I create it."
I AM AN AVENGER
MAY 2010
I AM AN AVENGER
MAY 2010
MARVEL

Back to Press

•***Avengers Initiative #1 2nd Printing*** (DEC098437), in stores 3/3.

•***Fantastic Four #575 2nd Printing*** (DEC098446), in stores 3/10.

•***Ultimate Comics X #1 2nd Printing*** (DEC098445), in stores 3/10.

•***Incorruptible #2 2nd Printing,*** featuring a distressed version of the cover for the first printing, in stores in mid-March.

•***Mass Effect: Redemption #1 2nd Printing,*** in stores in early March.

•***Mass Effect: Redemption #2 2nd Printing,*** in stores in mid-March.

Coming Comics—Dark Horse in May

Dark Horse celebrates the 60th anniversary of ***Peanuts*** with the release of the ***60th Anniversary Classic Peanuts Charlie Brown*** syroco-style statue that depicts Charlie Brown as he appeared when the strip first debuted. This sculpture, limited to 950 numbered pieces, is packaged in a tin box along with a pinback button and character booklet.

Akiko creator *Mark Crilley* launches a new six-volume limited series with the release of ***Brody's Ghost Book One,*** a 96-page digest-sized trade paperback. It all begins when Brody is confronted by a ghostly teenage girl in the middle of a busy city street. She enlists his help in hunting down a dangerous killer; to prepare, though, he must undergo training from the spirit of a centuries-old samurai to unlock his hidden supernatural powers.

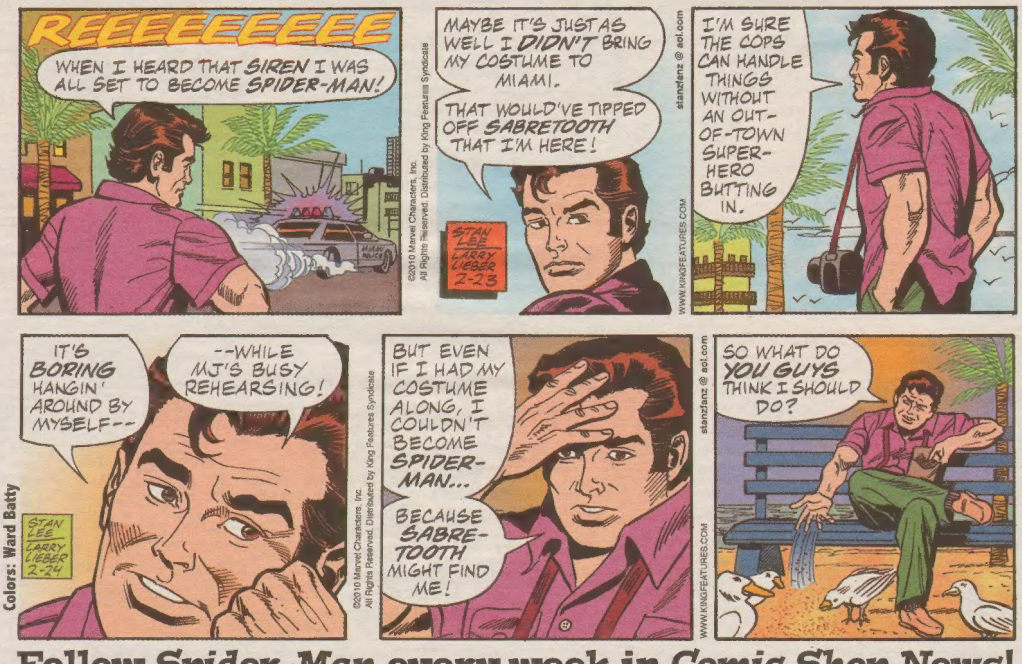
Brad Meltzer concludes his blockbuster story arc in ***Buffy the Vampire Slayer #3.***! Now that the true identity of Twilight is revealed, the Slayer army's entire mission has been altered...

Dark Horse revisits the earliest days of Scrooge and company with the release of ***Classic Uncle Scrooge Series 2 #1: Klondike,*** a 950-copy limited edition syroco-style sculpture based on *Carl Barks'* art from "Back to the Klondike."

Timothy Truman & Tomas Giorello kick off their adaptation of *Robert E. Howard's* "Iron Shadows in the Moon" in ***Conan the Cimmerian #22.***

Mike Mignola & Richard Corben reunite for a special Cinco de Mayo Hellboy tale, ***Hellboy in Mexico (Or, A Drunken Blur).*** During the 1950s, Hellboy caravans across Mexico with a trio of vampire-killing luchadores, finding the undead; evil turkeys; a terrible bat god; and a little too much tequila.

A new ***Star Wars*** miniseries comes to a comic shop not so far, far away with the release of ***Star Wars: Invasion—Rescues #1.*** The Yuuzhan Vong invasion spreads death and destruction across the galaxy, leaving behind ravaged worlds with little hope of survival. Now, Finn, Kaye, Nina, and Caled work to fight the invaders with the hope that one day they will again be together on their peaceful planet. Finn studies at the Jedi temple with Luke Skywalker and the grown Jedi children of Han Solo and Princess Leia! Kaye and Nina use a Yuuzhan Vong slave ship to attack their former captors! Caled raises forces on Artorias—not knowing the danger from one of his trusted allies!


REEEEEEEEEE
WHEN I HEARD THAT SIREN I WAS ALL SET TO BECOME SPIDER-MAN!
MAYBE IT'S JUST AS WELL I DIDN'T BRING MY COSTUME TO MIAMI.
THAT WOULD'VE TIPPED OFF SABRETOOTH THAT I'M HERE!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 2-23
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starofanz @ aol.com
I'M SURE THE COPS CAN HANDLE THINGS WITHOUT AN OUT-OF-TOWN SUPER-HERO BUTTING IN.
Colors: Ward Batty
IT'S BORING HANGIN' AROUND BY MYSELF--
--WHILE MJ'S BUSY REHEARSING!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 2-24
©2010 Marvel Characters, Inc. All Rights Reserved. Distributed by King Features Syndicate
BUT EVEN IF I HAD MY COSTUME ALONG, I COULDN'T BECOME SPIDER-MAN...
BECAUSE SABRETOOTH MIGHT FIND ME!
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SO WHAT DO YOU GUYS THINK I SHOULD DO?

Follow *Spider-Man* every week in *Comic Shop News*!

Dark Horse and Triad Toys join forces to bring Elisa Cameron, aka Ghost, into the third dimension with the release of the ***Ghost 12" Figure***, a deluxe ultra-detailed collectible articulated feature that comes complete with .45 caliber pistols, fitted gloves, white cape & cowl, and luxurious realistic hair.

Best-selling author *Janet Evanovich* continues her Barnaby series in the original graphic novel ***Troublemaker Book One***, co-written by *Janet & Alex Evanovich* with art by *Joelle Jones*. Alexandra Barnaby and Sam Hooker are back together and fighting crime the only way they know how—by leaving a trail of chaos, panic, and disorder. Alex, an auto mechanic and spotter for racecar driver Sam Hooker, is drawn to trouble—and she's also drawn to Hooker. There's no steering clear of trouble or Hooker when friends Rosa and Felicia call for help. A man has gone missing, and in order to find him Barnaby and Hooker will have to go deep into the underbelly of Miami and southern Florida, surviving Petro Voodoo, explosions, gift-wrapped body parts, a deadly swamp chase, and Hooker's mom.

For the discerning ***Umbrella Academy*** fan and collector, Dark Horse offers the 500-copy ***Umbrella Academy Pocket Watch & Statue Set***, featuring a pocket watch replete with artwork from ***The Umbrella Academy***, paired with a 5.5" statuette of 00.05, also known as The Boy, whose character is often seen glancing at a similar timepiece in the saga of his reluctant superhero family. The watch comes in a deluxe faux-leather, velveteen-lined box with a numbered metal certificate of authenticity. A sleek outer sleeve, designed by *Gabriel Bá*, holds it all together in one classy, modern package.

Dark Horse collected volumes include:

•***BPRD: 1947 TP***, collecting the five-issue limited series plus a short story from ***MySpace Dark Horse Presents***.

•***Usagi Yojimbo Volume 24: Return of the Black Soul TP & HC***, collecting "Sparrows," the dramatic return of the demon Jei, and "The Darkness and the Soul," Jei's long-awaited origin, plus the ***Usagi*** short from ***Free Comic Book Day 2009***.

•***Cardcaptor Sakura Omnibus Volume One TP***, a 576-page compendium of *Clamp*'s shojo manga.

•***Conan: The Spear & Other Stories TP***, collecting the various Conan collaborations by *Timothy Truman & Paul Lee*.

•***The Goon: Fancy Pants Edition Volume 3—Goon Year HC***, a compilation of all of *Eric Powell*'s stories from "Goon Year: The Return of Labrazio" in a signed limited-edition hardcover.

•***Nexus Archives Volume 11 HC***, collecting 232 pages of *Nexus* tales by *Mike Baron, Mark Heike, John K Snyder III, Luke McDonnell, & Hugh Haynes*.

•***Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic Volume 9—Demon TP***, collecting ***Knights of the Old Republic #s 47-50***.

•***Star Wars: Legacy Volume 9—Monster TP***, collecting ***Legacy #s 42-46***.

•***Tarzan Archives: The Jesse Marsh Years Volume 6 HC***, collecting ***Tarzan #s 28-32 & Tarzan's Jungle Annual #1***.

•***Thun'da, King of the Congo Archive HC***, a 224-page collection of early 1950s Thun'da tales from ***Thun'da #s 1-6***, ***Cave Girl***, and ***Africa: Thrilling Land of Mystery*** by *Frank Frazetta, Gardner Fox, & Bob Powell*.

•***Turok, Son of Stone Archives Volume 6 HC***, collecting ***Turok #s 31-35 & 37*** (and no, your collection won't be incomplete—#36 was a reprint of an issue included in ***Turok Archives Volume 3***).

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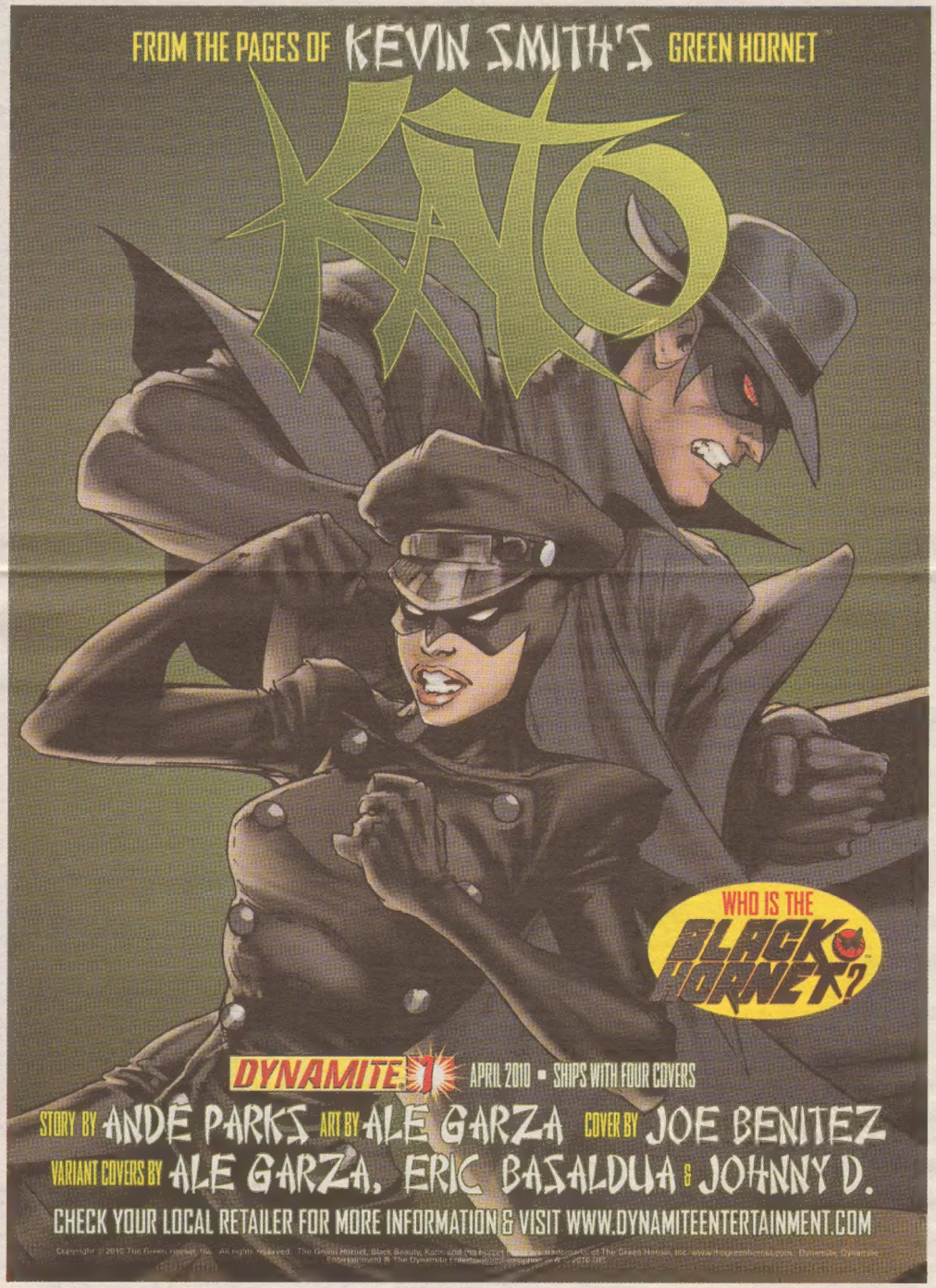
FROM THE PAGES OF KEVIN SMITH'S GREEN HORNET
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